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September/October 2022

ENVIRONMENT

Progress Alert! USACE, Baltimore District, and MDOT Sign Agreement to Commence the Mid-Bay Project

The [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers \(USACE\), Baltimore District](#), the [Maryland Department of Transportation](#), The Secretary's Office (MDOT TSO) and [MDOT Maryland Port Administration \(MDOT MPA\)](#) signed a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) for the \$4 billion Mid-Chesapeake Bay ecosystem restoration project for James and Barren Island, also known as the Mid-Bay project. The PPA outlines the roles, responsibilities, and financial obligations for restoration, beneficially reusing material dredged from the Port of Baltimore shipping channels. The first contract for phase one on Barren Island is anticipated for award in the coming weeks.

"The Mid-Bay Project is the next frontier for coastal and island restoration. It will give us dredged sediment placement capacity for 30 years and strengthen the shoreline of Dorchester County," said MDOT MPA Executive Director William Doyle.



Photo: William Doyle, Jim Ports and Col. Estee Pinchasin at PPA signature ceremony at MDOT headquarters on August 23, 2022. "Rebuilding James and Barren Islands will promote wildlife, restore coastal shorelines, and provide us with a long-term placement site for dredged material from port shipping channels, allowing us to accommodate larger ships bringing more cargo and business to Maryland," said MDOT Secretary James F. Ports. Photo credit: USACE, Baltimore District.

EDF Climate Corps Fellow, Aaryaman Singhal, Develops Greenhouse Gas Estimates for Poplar Island

Every year, MDOT MPA, with the help of the USACE, maintains the depths and widths of the shipping channels in the Chesapeake Bay, Baltimore Harbor, and the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal through the dredging of nearly five million cubic yards of sediment. Dredged material has been used to restore eroded islands and develop wildlife habitats, such as [Poplar Island](#), which has the potential to mitigate the effects of sea-level rise.

To gain a better understanding of the potential for Poplar Island to serve as a carbon sink, MDOT MPA enlisted Aaryaman Singhal to study the methodology. Singhal developed greenhouse gas (GHG) estimates for different land-use types, using site-specific and reference data. This work improved the understanding of key uncertainties in the GHG estimates, especially due to methane fluxes.



Photo: Aaryaman "Sunny" Singhal, [Environmental Defense Fund](#) (EDF) Climate Corps Fellow, developed a method to estimate GHGs at Poplar Island, along with recommendations on next steps to increase the accuracy of the estimates and inform choices for future wetland restoration project designs for MDOT MPA. Photo credit: Cynthia Hudson, MDOT MPA

COMMUNITY

DNR Chesapeake and Coastal Services Team Visits Masonville Cove

In early September, a team from the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources Chesapeake and Coastal Service](#) Unit (DNR/CCS) had the opportunity to visit [Masonville Cove](#) and the adjacent [Dredged Material Containment Facility](#) (DMCF) and learn more about the nation's first Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. According to Maggie Cavey, Natural Resource Planner for Beneficial Use, DNR Chesapeake Coastal Services, "the CCS team takes excursions to see the progress of our projects as well as other environmentally related projects/sites". Additionally, MDOT MPA Program Manager for Education & Stakeholder Engagement Katrina Jones presented attendees with an overview of the Masonville Cove project, provided information on the MDOT MPA's role in the community and about the state's dredged material management program.





*The beautiful day allowed the CCS team to take in some fishing.
Photo Credits: Maggie Cavey, DNR/CCS*



Attendees had the opportunity to see [Captain Trash Wheel](#) in action and collect 73 pounds of debris in a shoreline clean-up! Photo credit: Katrina Jones MDOT MPA

Harbor Team Merges with Citizens Advisory Committee

Recently, the Harbor Team merged with the [Citizens Advisory Committee](#) (CAC) to accommodate the changing priorities and future needs of the [Dredged Material Management Program](#) (DMMP). For nearly 20 years, the Harbor Team served as the model for subsequent MDOT MPA committees in how it was formed and managed.

The Harbor Team developed recommendations to MDOT MPA on how dredged material should be managed in the Baltimore Harbor. Following this merger, the Harbor Team members and mission will continue with the CAC. "The CAC will address the unique Baltimore Harbor dredged material placement needs, the advancement of long-term capacity solutions, and innovative reuse opportunities," said MDOT MPA Executive Director William Doyle.



CAC and Harbor Team committee members met at [MedStar Health](#) on September 21 to celebrate the merger. According to MDOT MPA Executive Director William Doyle, "Merging the two groups will provide efficiencies for the committee members, many of whom generously serve both committees." Photo credit: Angie Ashley/Angie Ashley Consulting

Masonville Cove Connector Kick-off

The Memorandum of Agreement for the Masonville Cove Connector was signed in July 2022 by project partners including MDOT MPA, [Federal Highway Administration Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division](#), [National Park Service](#), and the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service \(USFWS\)](#). The Connector, a shared-use path, will connect local communities to the beautiful Masonville Cove.

Walkers, joggers, and bicyclists will benefit from the Connector, and the project will help fulfill MDOT MPA's commitment to South Baltimore communities to restore safe and equitable access to the waterfront as part of the construction of the Masonville DMCF. Thirty percent of the design is expected to be completed by summer of 2023. For more information, email MDOT MPA Project Manager Joe Ross at jross@marylandports.com.



Photo: Bird's eye view of Masonville Cove. Additional access to the waterfront for the communities surrounding Masonville Cove will soon become a reality with the Masonville Cove Connector. Photo credit: Masonville Cove Partnership

OUTREACH

Urban Wildlife Conservation Day Celebrated at Masonville Cove with a Visit from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams

On September 24th, community members gathered at Masonville Cove to celebrate National Public Lands Day hosted by the Masonville Cove Partnership (National Aquarium, USFWS, Living Classrooms Foundation and MDOT MPA). Families had the opportunity to explore the site, which includes 70 acres of water and 54 acres of restored wetlands and nature trails in the heart of Baltimore City. The attendees engaged in fun activities such as kayaking, bird banding, monarch butterfly tagging, and tours to the Masonville DMCF.

"With 80 percent of Americans living in cities, these programs and places encourage new generations to connect to the land, water, and wildlife. Building connections to nature and wildlife also enhances the social and economic vitality of urban communities," said USFWS Director Martha Williams.



Photo: National Aquarium staff, MDOT MPA Deputy Executive Director Robert Munroe, USFWS Director Martha Williams, and USFWS Conservation Program Manager, Angelina Yost during the [BioBlitz 2022](#) on the National Public Lands Day. Photo credit: Amira M. Hairston, MDOT MPA



Photo: Families learning how [Captain Trash Wheel](#) at Masonville Cove stops trash from reaching the ocean. Photo credit: Amira M. Hairston, MDOT MPA





Photo: A youth makes friends with an owl as Master Falconer Rodney Stotts informed visitors about birds of prey. Photo credit: Amira M. Hairston, MDOT MPA

AAPA Award - Port of Baltimore's Environmental Education E-Portal

The [American Association of Port Authorities](#) (AAPA) recognized the [Port of Baltimore \(POB\)](#) for its outstanding [Environmental Education E-learning \(E3\) portal](#), an environmental education and outreach tool that has successfully brought the Port closer to local communities, while inspiring next generations of scientists and environmentalists.

Developed by the POB Environmental Education Team for lessons, programs, and making activities more accessible to the community, the E3 portal also informs on the Port's activities, its mitigation and habitat restoration projects, and the benefits of innovative use of dredged material.

The E3 initiative has received great feedback from community members, such as: "This program connects perfectly with our curriculum. It is such a great engaging and informative session for our kids. Thank you!!" (2nd Grade Teacher, [Westowne Elementary School](#)).



The E3 portal features multiple kinds of environmental lessons, informative virtual games, and streamlining request services for tours and programs as in-person opportunities become available. Find more at <https://www.portofbaltimoreeducation.org/>.



[Terrapin Education Research Partnership \(TERP\) Program](#) page hosts all terrapin lessons and informs about the program. Terrapin Travels and many other lessons are available virtually!



Photo: MDOT MPA Executive Director William Doyle accepts the award at the 111th AAPA Conference in Orlando, FL. Photo Credit: MDOT MPA.

UPCOMING EVENTS

These committee meetings are open to the public. Some meetings may be virtual or in-person in accordance with COVID protocols. Please visit maryland-dmmp.com for details and access information for each meeting. For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

DMMP Management Committee Meeting - November 16th at 10:00AM (Virtual)
For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

Mid-Bay Poster Session - November 19th from 10:00AM to 12:00PM
Hoopers Island Fire Department
2756 Hoopers Island Road
Fishing Creek, MD 21634

DMMP Executive Committee Meeting - November 29th at 1:00 PM
Maryland Department of Transportation Headquarters
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee Meeting - November 30th at 5:30 PM
Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility Operations Building
1000 Kembo Road
Baltimore, MD 21226

DMMP Annual Committee Meeting - December 9th at 10:00AM (Hybrid)
Registration opens November 9th – maryland-dmmp.com
MedStar Harbor Hospital
3001 Hanover Street
Baltimore, MD 21225

[MDOT MPA Website](#)

[Port of Baltimore Magazine](#)

[Environment Website](#)



ECO Port Newsletter is the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration's bi-monthly update of projects and programs that help the agency contribute to a thriving economy, environmental stewardship, and community partnerships. As always, we thank the many private sector businesses, government leaders, communities, and individual citizens who have helped make these achievements a reality.



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